

Elementary and Secondary Education Act Waiver Frequently Asked Questions March 19, 2012

District Goal Setting

Timeline of Goal Setting

The targets that are due for LEAs on March 19 are using what year of data and for determinations for which school year?

The current window is to submit targets for 2011-12. The baseline year for the targets or Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) is the data from the 2010-11 school year. LEAs will use this data to set their 2011-12 AMOs. Determinations for achieving or missing targets for the 2011-12 school year will be made this summer following testing.

How many years are LEAs currently setting AMOs for?

LEAs are currently setting targets for one year only. LEAs will set targets for 2012-13 this summer.

When will the department approve AMOs?

The department will work with districts to approve targets by March 28.

Achievement Targets

Will the new goals set in March supersede the First to the Top goals?

You may keep your First to the Top approved goals or take this opportunity to edit them.

Are LEAs setting the goals or is the department setting them?

The department is providing a suggested target for each subject. Districts may edit or accept those targets during this window. The department is unlikely to accept lower targets except in cases where the district using the state suggested target would lead to the district's achievement levels rapidly approaching very high levels of proficiency or graduation rates.

Gap Closure Targets

What are the racial/ethnic groups used for the gap closure data?

Racial/ethnic groups that were underperforming the state average in the 2010-11 school year are used to define the racial/ethnic subgroup. These groups are African American, Hispanic, and Native American students. These same subgroups will continue to be used going forward.

Will the racial/ethnic gaps be analyzed by the same subgroups for all tests, or will they be test dependant?

These three groups define the subgroup used to analyze the gaps across all tests within the racial/ethnic subgroup versus all student comparison.

Are we not looking at all racial/ethnic groups or just those mentioned?

For the purposes of setting gap closure targets and holding school districts accountable, the state will only use these three groups to define the racial/ethnic subgroup. Individual subgroup performance will be reported on the new Report Card and a decline in individual subgroup performance could lead to district identification if the district misses more than half of its gap closure goals.

Are LEAs accountable for students with disabilities and English language learners?

LEAs will be held accountable for closing achievement gaps between these students with disabilities and students without disabilities and for English language learners and non-ELL students. Results for these subgroups will also be reported on the new Report Card.

Will Portfolio and MAAS students count toward the students with disabilities gap closure?

As has been the state's practice in the past, both Portfolio and MAAS students will be included in the students with disabilities subgroup. Tennessee will continue to permit LEAs to exceed the 1 percent cap on the number of proficient and advanced scores based on the alternate achievement standards that can be included in accountability calculations if the LEA establishes that the incidence of students with the most significant disabilities, as defined by the State, exceeds the limit and if the LEA documents circumstances that explain the higher percentage. Without approval requesting the extension of the 1 percent cap, proficient scores exceeding this cap must be changed to below proficient for accountability purposes. The scores for students with disabilities who take the modified achievement standards assessment (MAAS) will be included in the assessment data in the accountability system so long as the number of those proficient and advanced scores does not exceed 2 percent of all students in the grades assessed at the LEA and State levels.

How will the N of 30 affect what gap closure goals LEAs need to set?

LEAs will only need to set goals for those areas where they have at least 30 students in both the subgroup and the comparison group. The online accountability application was adjusted on Tuesday, March 13 to show only those areas where the LEA is expected to set goals. The downloadable data at the LEA level shows the gap data for areas with less than 30 students for reference only.

Why might we have more than 30 students but not see a suggested target for gap closure?

In cases where the achievement gap is negative and the traditionally underperforming subgroup is performing higher than the comparison group (i.e. Non Economically Disadvantaged students performing below Economically Disadvantaged students), LEAs will not set an achievement gap target.

Baseline Data

Does writing count in the Reading/Language Arts score?

No. Writing is not included in the Reading/Language Arts baseline data nor is it included in district goal setting. We will continue to administer the writing test even though it will not be included in district or school determinations. Writing test results will continue to be reported on the Report Card.

Are science scores included in the district goals?

No. Science scores are not included in district goals. For the school list calculations, science was not included in Focus High schools. Science results will continue to be reported on the Report Card.

Will the summer test takers count in the previous year or the following year?

Summer test takers will count in the following year.

When we code membership on answer docs, we have not been held accountable for students who entered after the 20th day of school. Will that change?

Yes. Schools and LEAs are accountable for students regardless of the date they enrolled. The department examined the data using both the every test taker data and the definition of continuously enrolled previously used and determined that there was very little difference between the two data sets. However, the department is asking that LEAs still code membership on tests in the 2011-12 school year to ensure that there are no unanticipated consequences for schools or LEAs from this change.

How are the 3-8 Math and Algebra I baseline scores calculated given the change to testing for middle school students enrolled in Algebra I prior to high school?

The data for 3-8 Math currently includes both students that took the Achievement test in 2010-11 and those that took the Algebra I test. If you are looking at the raw data in the LEA or school tables online, please note that this means that you will use 3-8 Math All Grades + Algebra I for 7th and 8th grade to establish the 3-8 Math baseline. For Algebra I, you will use Algebra I All Grades – Algebra I for 7th and 8th grade.

The department recognizes the difficulty in setting targets for a testing scenario that has not yet occurred. We are committed to ensuring that the baseline data and targets most closely mirror the anticipated change to data that will occur through the implementation of the testing change requiring that students not take both End of Course and Achievement. We are currently examining the issue more closely and will work with you all on the goals to ensure that we minimize or eliminate any possible effect. Please set your goals according to the data presented.

How are the 7th grade math scores calculated?

The data for 7th grade Math currently includes only students that took the Achievement test in 2010-11 and not those that took the Algebra I test.

The department recognizes the difficulty in setting targets for a testing scenario that has not yet occurred. We are committed to ensuring that the baseline data and targets most closely mirror the anticipated change to data that will occur through the implementation of the testing change requiring that students not take both End of Course and Achievement. We are currently examining the issue more closely and will work with you all on the goals to ensure that we minimize or eliminate any possible effect. Please set your goals according to the data presented.

Why does my data look different than on the Report Card or in my district profile from the beginning of the school year?

There are some key differences in the baseline data provided for the goal setting process and those data that were previously released. The change in 3-8 Math and Algebra I as described above is the primary difference. The other difference is that we are using every test taker as the base data set without applying a definition for membership. In the future, the department will use the same baseline data for accountability determinations, the Report Card, district profiles, and other reported data.

The essential definitions for the data set are below:

- Baseline data for goals is 2010-11 school year
- Every test taker data
- Best score of test taker within test cycle (prior Summer, current year Fall and Spring)

- Test scores attributed to school or group of students where test was taken and not “banked”
- LEP subgroup will include transition students once the N of 30 is met
- Rounded to nearest .1, up from .05, down from .049, with rounding taking place prior to determinations

School Level Targets

When are school level targets due to the department?

School level targets should be established after district targets have been approved. The targets are due to the department on April 10.

Will the department provide suggested school level targets to LEAs?

The department will provide suggested school level targets to LEAs, but would suggest that LEAs work with their individual schools to set realistic targets based on where the schools are starting and ensuring that the school level targets add up to the LEA targets.

Will there be determinations for schools based on achieving or missing the targets set by the LEA?

No. Schools will not be placed in a status based on the targets set by the LEA. However, school level achievement data and targets will be reported on the Report Card.

Calculating Targets (Updated 3/19/12)

Calculating Achievement Targets

Step 1: Calculate baseline proficiency rates

Baseline Proficiency = $\frac{\text{\# of students Proficient and Advanced}}{\text{\# of students Basic, Below Basic, Proficient and Advanced}}$

	# B, BB, P, A	# P/A	% P/A
3-8 Reading	156	75	48.1%

Step 2: Calculate suggested target

48.1%	+	3.1%	=	51.2%	suggested goal
		(state goal)			

Calculating Gap Closure Targets

Step 1: Calculate baseline proficiency rates for comparison groups

Baseline Proficiency = $\frac{\text{\# of students Proficient and Advanced}}{\text{\# of students Basic, Below Basic, Proficient and Advanced}}$

	# B, BB, P, A	# P/A	% P/A
ED	121	68	56.2%
Non-ED (All students minus ED students)*	145	101	69.7%

Step 2: Calculate the baseline gap size

69.7%	-	56.2%	=	13.5%
(Non ED)		(ED)		(gap)

Step 3: Calculate suggested gap size with 6.25% reduction

13.5%	x	6.25%	=	0.8%	point reduction
(gap)					
13.5%	-	0.8%	=	12.7%	suggested gap size

*Same process applies for Non-SWD and Non-ELL, but use All students as comparison group for Racial/Ethnic subgroup

School Lists – Focus/Reward/Priority

For schools that have been identified as a focus school this year, what are the accountability measures they will need to take?

Schools identified as Focus schools in the waiver application will not have to take any accountability related actions this year. However, all schools should work toward continuing to close any achievement gaps. The school lists will be run again this summer and districts and schools will be notified at that time.

How is a 2-yr success rate calculated when a school has less than 30 test takers in a particular subject (i.e. less than 30 students taking Algebra I, but greater than 30 students in all other areas)?

If a school has less than 30 students in some tested areas but more than 30 students in other test areas, only those subjects with 30 or more students are included in the success rate. For example, if a high school tested 28 students in Algebra 1, 37 students in English II and had 45 students in the cohort to graduate, their success rate would be based on English II and graduation performance.

Will there be an identification for those schools who do not fall into Focus/Reward/Priority?

No. There will not be an identification for those schools that are not on one of the lists. However, schools that are on the cusp of being identified will receive letters notifying them that they just missed being identified.

When will the school lists be run again?

The school lists will be run again this summer and districts and schools will be notified at that time.